

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-07 L-03 OIC-02
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FMC-01 INR-07
NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09 AID-05 CEQ-01 ERDA-05
EPA-01 NSF-01 NSC-05 PM-04 USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02
FEAE-00 INT-05 /112 W

-----057503 231327Z /46

R 231150Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3962

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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USOECD ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: NA/A

TAGS: SENV, NO

SUBJECT: NORTH SEA STATES HOLD OIL SPILL CONFERENCE IN NORWAY

REF: STATE 142092 (NOTAL)

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. SUMMARY: THE NORWEGIAN

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GOVERNMENT'S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO ASSESS THE IMPACT
OF AND PLOT FUTURE ACTIONS FROM THE RECENT NORTH SEA OIL RIG
BLOWOUT VERY NEARLY PROVED TO BE A BLOWOUT ITSELF. NORWAY'S
KEEN DESIRE TO USE THE RECENT INCIDENT TO GALVANIZE
COOPERATIVE ACTION AND TO PREVENT AND CLEAN UP OIL SPILLS
IN THE NORTH SEA WAS PARTIALLY SHARED BY SOME OF THE OTHER
COUNTRIES, BUT THE CONFERENCE GOT HUNG UP ON DETAILS OF

IMPLEMENTATION. THE UK, HOWEVER, LARGELY RESISTED COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES. THE OSLO CONFERENCE DID, NONE-THELESS, MANAGE AFTER A FASHION TO AGREE TO SOME COOPERATIVE MEASURES AGAINST OIL SPILLS, WHICH NORTH SEA STATES WILL PURSUE UNDER THEIR 1969 BONN CONVENTION. END SUMMARY.
END SUMMARY.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SEVEN MINISTERS AND 80 REPRESENTATIVES FROM 12 COUNTRIES AND THREE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ATTENDED THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT'S CONFERENCE HELD IN OSLO JUNE 22 ON THE RECENT NORTH SEA OIL SPILL. THE GON CALLED THE CONFERENCE SPECIFICALLY TO SPELL OUT ITS FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON LAST APRIL'S EKOFISK FIELD OIL SPILL AND TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS IN COOPERATION BETWEEN NORTH SEA STATES FOR PREVENTION AND COMBATTING OF SPILLS FROM OFFSHORE FACILITIES. NORWAY'S ENVIRONMENT MINISTER BRANDTLAND, ASSISTED BY INDUSTRY MINISTER GJERDE, LED THE PROCEEDINGS WHICH WERE ATTENDED BY DELEGATIONS FROM BELGIUM, DENMARK, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, GREAT BRITAIN, SWEDEN AND WEST GERMANY; AND OBSERVERS FROM CANADA, FINLAND, IRELAND, ICELAND, U.S. AND THE OECD, ECE AND EC COMMISSION.

2. CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS CONCLUDED IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONFERENCE'S CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR EFFECTIVE NATIONAL EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS ON THE NORTH SEA, AND BASED ON THESE NATIONAL MEASURES, THAT
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STRENGTHENED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WERE REQUIRED TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS AND COMBAT OIL SPILLS.

3. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION THE CONFERENCE DECIDED TO CONVENE A MEETING IN THE NETHERLANDS IN 1978 TO ASSESS THE RESULTS OF STUDIES CONDUCTED UNDER THE 1973 LONDON CONFERENCE TO IMPROVE AND HARMONIZE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS. IT ALSO AGREED TO CONSIDER FOLLOW-UP AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND PREVENT OIL POLLUTION FROM NORTH SEA OPERATIONS.

4. DELEGATES PLACED SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON USE OF THE 1969 BONN CONVENTION AS MECHANISM FOR EXPANDED COOPERATION IN NORTH SEA. IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE DELEGATES AGREED (A) TO MOVE FORWARD UPCOMING MEETING OF GOVERNMENTS UNDER BONN CONVENTION FROM NEXT SPRING TO DECEMBER 1977 IN FRG. DELEGATES AGREED THAT AT MEETING IN FRG THEY WOULD (B) DEVELOP FURTHER MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AND JOINT EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR LARGE AREAS OF NORTH SEA AND IN PARTICULAR BETWEEN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, (C) ENCOURAGE NORTH SEA OFFSHORE OPERATORS TO DEVELOP JOINT ORGANIZATION FOR COMBATING OIL SPILLS, (D) CONVENE EXPERT MEETINGS TO EVALUATE EXISTING CHEMICAL AND MECHANICAL MEANS

OF CLEANUP WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO THEIR EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, (E) MAKE COORDINATED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORT TO IMPROVE VARIOUS MEANS OF COMBATTING OIL POLLUTION, AND (F) CONSIDER PERMANENT SECRETARIAT IN ORDER FACILITATE COOPERATION UNDER BONN CONVENTION.

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R 231150Z JUN 77
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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5. IN ASSESSING RESULTS OF BRAVO BLOWOUT, MINISTER BRUNDTLAND SAID NORWAY WAS FORTUNATE TO GET OFF WITH ONLY MINIMUM DAMAGE. OF 15-21,000 TONS OF OIL THAT ESCAPED DURING BLOWOUT, 50 PERCENT EVAPORATED, WHILE ONLY 8,200 TONS WERE RECOVERED. CURRENT AND WIND KEPT SPILL LOCALIZED IN NORTH SEA (SLICK EXPANDING AT MAXIMUM TO 6,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS) AND OIL NEVER DID REACH SHORE. TAR BALL CLUSTERS STILL REMAIN IN NORTH SEA. SHORT RUN DAMAGE WAS NOT SIGNIFICANT AND LONG RUN DAMAGE TO MARINE LIFE DOES NOT SEEM GREAT, THOUGH IT IS STILL UNDER STUDY.

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CLEANUP COSTS RAN TO \$5 MILLION WITH ADDITIONAL COSTS TO PHILLIPS OF STOPPING BLOWOUT AND IN LOST PRODUCTION. FIFTY-FIVE TONS OF CHEMICALS WERE USED TO PREVENT FIRE AROUND PLATFORM. MECHANICAL CLEANUP TECHNIQUES PROVED INADEQUATE, AND GON REJECTED USE OF CHEMICALS FOR OIL CLEANUP ACTIVITIES. END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. ENVIRONMENT MINISTER SAID BRAVO PLATFORM ACCIDENT CONVINCED GON OF NEED FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AND EARLY CONVENING OF OSLO MEETING WAS EFFORT TO PROMOTE GREATER COLLABORATION. BUT WE BELIEVE RESULTS OF CURRENT MEETING WERE CLEARLY A DISAPPOINTMENT TO GON OFFICIALS WHO WERE HOPING TO STIMULATE BROAD RANGE OF COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONAL OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND CONTROL ACTIVITIES AMONG CONCERNED STATES.

7. AMONG NORTH SEA STATES, BELGIANS, DANES, DUTCH, FRG AND FRANCE EXPRESSED GENERAL SUPPORT OF THE GON PROPOSALS. BUT THE UK CLEARLY WAS NOT PREPARED TO GO ALONG. ITS 11-MAN DELEGATION LED BY ENERGY MINISTER OF STATE DICKSON MABON AGGRESSIVELY RESISTED DETAILS OF MINISTER BRUNDTLAND'S PROPOSALS. AFTER REPORTEDLY AGREEING WITH THE GON NOT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THE USE OF CHEMICAL DISPERSANTS IN CLEANUP OPERATIONS, THE UK GAVE A 15-MINUTE LECTURE TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE VALUES OF CHEMICALS AND THE UK'S RIGHT TO USE THEM WITHOUT CONSULTING OTHER STATES. LATER THE UK DEL SOUGHT TO INSERT THIS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE, WHERE THEY STOOD ALONE, INTO THE COMMUNIQUE. THIS CAUSED A DELAY WHICH FORCED SEVERAL OTHER DELEGATIONS TO LEAVE TO MEET TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS WERE AGREED UPON.

8. THE UK OBSTRUCTION AND LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR MULTILATERAL
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COOPERATION IN PREVENTION AND CLEANUP MEASURES PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED TO FRANCE'S OBJECTION TO WHAT APPEARED TO BE AN EMERGING CONSENSUS TO ESTABLISH THE OSLO AND PARIS CONVENTION SECRETARIAT AS THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE BONN CONVENTION. THE UK IS CURRENTLY SERVING AS SECRETARIAT FOR THE FORMER ACCORDS. THE SECRETARIAT ISSUE WILL NOW BE DISCUSSED AGAIN IN THE NEXT BONN CONVENTION MEETING. THE UK ALSO STOOD DISTINCTLY APART FROM THE DUTCH AND FRENCH IN RESISTING ANY EC INVOLVEMENT IN SETTING STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR

SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF OFFSHORE FACILITIES.

9. WHILE THE CONFERENCE DID NOT LIVE UP TO GON EXPECTATIONS AND EXPOSED SOME SERIOUS POINTS OF DIFFERENCE AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS ON SPECIFICS OF IMPLEMENTATION, IT DID ALSO SHOW A GOOD DEAL OF INTEREST BY MOST STATES IN PRINCIPLE IN COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO THE NORTH SEA OIL POLLUTION PROBLEM. IT MANAGED TO SHOW THE PARTICIPANTS THAT A GOOD DEAL OF COORDINATION AMONG COUNTRIES AND CONVENTIONS IS STILL NEEDED, AND IT SEEMS IN FACT TO HAVE STIRRED THEM TO SEVERAL POSITIVE THOUGH MODEST EFFORTS IN THAT DIRECTION.

10. EMBASSY IS POUCHING COPY OF CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS TO DEPT (OES DEP ASST SEC GRANT). END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. BREMER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Sent Date: 23-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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Format: TEL
From: OSLO
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SAS ID: 2050605
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TAGS: SENV, NO
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